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THE MUSICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

SIXTH SEASON, 1864.

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THE DONCASTER ORGAN.

(*Continued from page* 740.)

In examining the scheme above quoted, we are reminded that its ninety-four stops do not all really exist as distinct registers. Thus, most of the stops in the solo organ are "taken" from the swell. This means, in fact, that the stops referred to exist, in reality, only in the swell, but may be separately commanded by the keys of the solo manual. This plan has evidently been adopted for the double purpose of securing variety of effect without change of stops, and of permitting the use of what may be called *cross* combinations between various stops of the same organ. The idea is by no means new. It existed—and, we believe, still exists—in the Birmingham instrument, but in a more developed form: for here, any stop of either swell or choir organ can be reproduced, separately or together, on the "Combination Manual." In neither case do, we think, the result of the plan worth its trouble. There are mechanical complications about it which render a distinct series of pipes nearly as economical, and with better effect. Again, the twenty-five stops of the pedal organ are not all real, or at least, *complete* registers. Several of them—we cannot, at this moment, state how many—are produced, or rather *simulated*, by a recommencement on the second C of some other stop of an octave lower nominal pitch, while the wanting notes of the highest octave are supplied by additional pipes. Thus, the octave of an open diapason becomes a principal, the octave of a trumpet does duty for a clarion, and so forth. Now, we are obliged to condemn this plan as bad in every respect. It inevitably introduces errors of *scaleing*, which, bad any where, are altogether unaccountable in the Doncaster organ. The octave of a diapason, for example, can never, either in scale or quality, *properly* represent a principal, often as the thing has been done. Again, in the pallets and wind passages of such a system there are unavoidable complexities (similar to those in the solo organ above mentioned) quite sufficient to disfavor the plan as dangerous, and almost worthless in point of economy. Most of all, however, there can be no excuse for such an expedient in the Doncaster organ. Without it, the pedal organ would have been amply sufficient for the rest of the instrument; with it, it is cumbrously and disproportionately large. As this is the only exception to the extreme honesty and untrickiness of the general plan, we can scarcely suppose it to have originated with M. Schulze. It was probably suggested by the desire to claim for Doncaster the largest pedal organ in the kingdom, and, if so, it succeeds—at least on paper. The author of the pamphlet we have elsewhere quoted,* takes care not to let this fact escape unnoticed. Of the pedal organ he says that it far exceeds "any other pedal organ in England, or even in Europe, containing, as it does, twenty-five stops, as compared with seventeen in the Liverpool organ, and sixteen in the Leeds organ, the two next largest instruments in this kingdom." He forgets, meanwhile, to tell us how these twenty-five stops are composed; and he forgets, too, that though magnitude may be, as Burke says, "an element of the sublime," it has never yet been allowed to stand alone for excellence in Art. Furthermore, if he think fit to try the experiment, he may find that the sixteen stops in the pedal organ at Leeds, probably by reason of their situation and the vast superiority of their reeds, produce a much grander effect than the twenty-five at Doncaster.

Having noticed these exceptions, we turn with pleasure to the genuine excellence, honesty, and *largeness* of the plan. Look where we will, the scheme of every manual has the same sterling qualities. In all the manuals there are but three stops cut short of compass at tenor C, and these are the better for it. There are no stops drawing in halves, no handfuls of insignificant four and two feet "flutes" to eke out numbers, no petty contrivances to cheat the eye with the sham of a big organ. In the flue-work of the great organ, for instance, there are, besides the sub-bourdon of 32 feet, two stops of 16 feet, four of 8 feet, three of 4 feet, quint, twelfth, and fifteenth, one of each, and fourteen ranks of mixtures; while the reeds show one of 16 feet, three of 8 feet, and one of 4 feet. The preference here manifested for stops of the foundation class extends equally through all the manuals. Thus, in the choir organ, there is one stop of 16 feet, six of 8, four of 4, and one of 2 feet, in the swell, two of 16, eight of 8, five of 4, and *none* of 2 feet, but there are twelve ranks of mixtures. And so, with all the rest of the organ, as our readers may see, by inspecting the general scheme. In all this, up to the extent of his knowledge and creed, the builder has done the fullest justice to his Doncaster clients. No one who inspects this plan can point out a single item in which money is not most amply represented by its value in the commodity supplied. Meanwhile, the particular distribution of this value may be fairly open to discussion. For example, considering the general *calibre* of the instrument, and especially the extraordinary development of its pedal department, it certainly appears that the great organ has not received its due share of expansion. As a matter of tone-balance the fifteenth and clarion registers are not proportionately represented; while, as to general development, if this great organ be compared with that of Leeds, with its flue stops, two of 16, six of 8, four of 4, two of 2 feet, with quint and twelfth and sixteen ranks of mixtures, and reeds, one of 16, three of 8, and two of 4 feet, it is impossible to deny the superiority of the latter. The choir organ seems entirely perfect, for its number of stops, viewed either from the English or German side of the question. The swell is a kind of compromise between the English and Continental notions of this manual; seeking, in fact, to combine the force and grandeur of the English practice with the retention of those peculiar and more delicate registers which have, until latterly, formed the staple of the swell or "echo" organs both in France and Germany. Unless viewed as a means of separately using many of the swell registers, as elsewhere noticed, the solo organ seems to us a complete misconception. It has no distinct and salient character; and, especially, it contains none of those remarkable high-pressure reeds which have latterly attained such excellence in this country, and which, notwithstanding several attempts, no continental builder has yet succeeded in even approaching. The scheme of the echo organ is altogether new to English practice. All its stops are of small scale, voiced to a very light pressure of wind, and of exquisite quality; and its whole effect is sufficiently beautiful to merit every enconium that may be passed upon it. To complete our notice of this scheme, it remains but to say that the mechanical aids supplied to the performer seem very inadequate to the magnitude of the instrument. There are no pedal couplers to either swell or choir organs; and, by a strange perversity of arrangement, while the three couplers—great to pedals, swell to great, and choir to great—are commanded by the player's feet, the management of the stops, "combinations," and all, is thrown entirely on his hands.

In proceeding to speak of the way in which this great work has been executed, we come first to the article of *tone*. With some exceptions to be presently noticed, M. Schulze's voicing is absolutely of first-rate excellence—free, so far as we can detect, from spot or blemish of any kind. The stops nominally familiar to English ears—diapasons, principals, mixtures, and the like—have a richness, grandeur, and, withal, vivacity, that positively startle by their freshness in comparison with the sickly drawling insipidity found in by far the majority of home-made instruments. Certain stops, too, of a rarer kind and peculiar formation, merit special notice for their exquisite character of tone. Of such are the "Lieblich Gedact"—tribe in the choir (three stopped diapasons, in fact, 16, 8, and 4 feet pitch, of wonderfully small scale, and most beautiful quality), the Hohlfloete in the great organ, the Geigen principal and Voil de Gamba in the choir, the Terpodion in the swell, and several others; all of which may be cited as unsurpassable gems of the voicer's art. Our Sheffield friend, also, is rapturous about M. Schulze's pre-eminent success with the harmonic flutes of the swell. In this, however, we cannot agree with him. The stops in question are, no doubt, of very fine quality, but, to our thinking, they are surpassed in France, and in recent English examples. While we are on this subject, it may be as well to refer briefly to the curious claim so generally set up for (by no means *by*) M. Schulze, to the effect that he has invented some extraordinary secret or system of voicing inaccessible to the rest of the world. M. Schulze's system is simply the employment of common sense and sound theory upon a much neglected subject. He takes care for example, *that the foot of every pipe shall supply more wind than can be needed at its mouth, so that the air-pressure supplied by the sound-board is delivered, unthrottled and unexpanded, to the parts where vibration commences, and at these parts all regulation as to quantity and direction is effected.* Here,

* Mr. William Shepherdson of Sheffield; to several of whose statements we shall probably have occasion to refer.

combined with accurate scaleing—is the secret of fine vigorous tone; and to the neglect of it—or rather to the prevalence of the *opposite* practice—is due all that puny wire-drawn nothingness that is so commonly the attribute of English voicing. Not, then, to the possession of any occult knowledge, but to the skilful application of a sound and obvious principle, and to the artistic tendency of his nature—compelling him to *perfect* every matter he takes in hand—is M. Schulze indebted for his deserved reputation as a master of tone.

The exceptions to the prevailing excellence of voicing in the Doncaster organ are supplied by the reeds. Here, again, we are much at issue with our pamphleteering friend, who, into whatever part of the organ he may travel, takes pains to specify the reeds as fine or magnificent, or wonderfully imitative of their typical instruments, or unequalled anywhere else. From all this we regret the necessity of dissent. The solo reeds, indeed, are of good quality, but they are everywhere far surpassed by modern French work, and certainly by the best English specimens. Still more noticeable is the inferiority of the reeds intended specially for power—as those of the great and pedal organs. All these stops—presumably from errors of scaleing and manipulation—are greatly deficient in volume and brilliance of tone. They have been excelled in most English organs of importance, and, indeed, are not for a moment comparable with the grand specimens found in the Leeds instrument.

Here, once again, we must endeavour to rescue M. Schulze from the kindness of his over-zealous friends. It has been very generally said of him that he "does not care at all to have reeds in his organs." Now—not to notice how far such a statement goes to exalt his prejudice at the expense of his judgment—we happen to know that this is by no means the fact. He himself gives a very different explanation. With the thorough candour and straitforwardness so admirably prominent in his character, he frankly avows (what an example for all quacks!) that he has as yet had insufficient experience with these registers, especially of the percussive kind, to perfect them as he wishes; but he adds that he is confident of mastering the difficulty. This should be sufficient for all who know the man. We, at least, are certain that such an earnest artistic nature as his must prevail over anything it attacks; and that, before long, M. Schulze will be found as great a master of reed-work as he now unquestionably is of every other portion of the voicer's craft.

HERR RICHARD WAGNER'S "TRILOGY."*

(*Continued from Page 742.*)

WAGNER has the right, nay, more: the greatest right to expect that his poems shall be accepted unconditionally as such, and not only when considered in their character as operatic books. The *Ring der Nibelungen* gives evidence of such an identification of the author with his subject; of such energy and grandeur in the treatment; as well as such strength, and, despite the unusual form to which it has to adapt itself, such flexibility of language, that we cannot deny the poet our admiration.† It is a new world of feeling in which he moves: strange, rigid, repulsive, powerful, but, in no instance, is the son of the present age visible or recognisable through the forms of the old gods and heroes. There is, in the poems, an abnegation of individuality, surprising in our subjective age, and, if we may say so, causing the greatest astonishment in the case of one who ordinarily so much, in this respect, resembles the age. That we lay so much stress upon the praise we accord for this will not appear strange to any one who has an opportunity of observing the puffed-up individuality that swims upon the surface of most of the currents of our literature. That the lighter it is, the more is this the case, may, as a rule, be asserted.

Grand, wild, and fantastic, do the poems of the *Nibelungenring* pass before us. They drag us, with irresistible force, into their magic circle; the noise of day is hushed; time rolls back over the course of thousands of years. The earth has been created but recently; the giants are still occupied in building the Götterburg; gods, goddesses, mountain-spirits, and witches, breathe and exist; god-despising heroes, and youths with brilliant, sun-like eyes, come, combat, and die; while we, held captive by the poet's spell, look on all this as if it must necessarily be. It may sound trivial, but, in the *Nibelungenring*, Wagner has proved himself to be a poet of great ability.

We regret that we must content ourselves with general praise. Our space will not allow us to quote any even of the most striking passages. Enough, *Der Ring der Nibelungen* is an admirable poem. The mighty subject is well worked out. Every where do we find occasion to praise boldness of conception, energetic treatment, and elevation of thought.

This, naturally, does not mean that there is absolutely nothing to censure, and that it is all poetic gold in the *Ring*. Even for perusal, and it is with reference to this that we are now speaking, there are many portions, such, for instance, as the strife of the gods, which are treated at too great a length. A certain pedantic spirit, desirous of employing what it has learnt, spins out in an extravagant degree the speeches having reference to the world of the gods. The reader, sometimes, fancies that he has an account of the whole system of northern mythology before him. Thus, despite of all the richness of the treatment, there is a dryness in the poem, because we frequently have explanations, but seldom far-extending side-glances into other matters. It is a large valley, with a gloomy prospect at the end, where we are wandering, but the valley is closed in at the sides; and thus, on the long road, our eye sometimes becomes fatigued. We know that, in a considerable degree, the *Edda* is to blame for this, but we cannot acquit the poet of all fault, if, when he adopts such a subject, he is unable to overcome the difficulties of it. Apart, however, from these general defects, we know of nothing, or little of importance, to criticise. We cannot, and will not, here dwell upon trifles. The work is grandly imagined, and, therefore, must not be judged in a carping spirit.

It is true that, in many respects, we do not agree with the author, as our readers will see; but we should never think of falling into the tone of a criticism, when the question is merely one of opposition of ideas.

Thus we are not, for instance, quite satisfied with Herr Wagner's treatment of the fable, and are inclined to believe that a toning-down from the Supernatural to the Human would have been preferable. Would the poem have lost, had we, at the conclusion, been led from the period of the gods to the time of mere mortals, in a similar fashion to that in which the *Nibelungenlied* has treated the story, instead of seeing it brought to an end with the *Götterdämmerung*, which is more angular, wilder, and more chaotic than aught preceding it? After we have followed the long course of the stream, Wagner causes the latter to be precipitated down an abyss; the dull rainbow of the spray-like fall must console us. Was he so apprehensive that the Rhine would run dry and be choked up, that he shows us only its glaciers and its world of rocks, but not its proud flood, where ships glide over it, while cities and castles are mirrored on its surface? It appears to us that the transition from the world of the gods in the *Rheingold* and the *Walküre*, through the heroic world in *Siegfried*, to the human world in *Siegfried's Tod*, would not be difficult, while it would be quite justifiable.

We might here, too, dwell upon another question relating to the selection of the subject. A poet will not allow any one to dictate to what period he shall have recourse for his poem. That Wagner has given us something admirable we have already said; but we cannot suppress the question whether it would not have been better for him to employ his power upon some other subject, more nearly connected with our own times? But he would not do so. From the very outset, he desired to break new ground for national poetry; he wanted to drag us out of our present smoothly polished every-day life: this was his aim. We will not enter, on this head, into any such disputes as those which have already often arisen, especially as regards the old Germanic mythology, where it so frequently happens that there are no points of contact between ourselves and the characters, which, it is true, are mighty, but, for us, rude and coarse. We will offer only a short remark, instead of entering into a minute discussion:—The Bardic poets sang of Teut and Thor, of Wodan and Cheruskern; Lessing wrote *Minna von Barnhelm*. Which benefitted us the most? It is precisely the very best intention, the most daring zeal, which shoots beyond the mark. Did Wagner do well in going farther and farther back when selecting his subjects, instead of making a bold plunge into the life of the present day? Modern life pulsates through his tones: for instance, the sensual passion of our own time glows throughout his *Tannhäuser*; and it is certain also, that, in the *Nibelungenring*, the gold fire of the present age will throb with demoniacal flames through the simple avarice of the olden times. Of what avail is it absolutely to force these contrasts between the tone and the text, when the text is old and the music to it new?—for, however purely and eternally human Wagner's poetic productions may be, there is not one of them, as far as we know, so independent of time, that the author, on the strength of it, could boast of having set the simple musical expression to simple words. The element of romance or antiquity has, at least, hitherto always clung to his poetic effusions. And to this, are we to have modern or classical music? In this respect, Wagner is at variance with himself. There

* Translated from the Vienna *Recensionen*, expressly for the *Musical World*, by T. V. BRIDGMAN.

† We think it our duty expressly to state that we ourselves do not share this "admiration," though we do not deny the peculiar vigour of Wagner's talent.—ED. RECENSIONEN.

are circumstances when a man, in his time, must stand upon the earth, and not outside, in order to move it. The only thing is to stand on the upper part of the ball, so as to set it rolling, without falling off.

Before considering the poems in relation to their representation, we have something to remark about the preface, which has already, probably, caused a great deal of bad blood. We have read a bitter criticism, the writer of which, when discussing this new notion of Wagner's, laid about him as furiously as Wagner's Fafner will have to lay about him, with his tail, upon the stage. We were not at all astonished at this, when we read Wagner's desires, and his Trilogy with the prelude or prologue. Wagner's wishes and plans simply go back to ancient Hellas. He obtained his song from Iceland, while he learned how to have it performed from the worshippers of Apollo and Dionysius. Among them stood theatres pretty nearly like those of which he dreams; among them were the performances, such as he desires, with the rich prince, formerly a rich citizen of Athens, to pay the expenses. There flocked the people to the Dionysia; there strode the forms of the gods over the stage, while heroes defied the Eternal and Fate itself; there did Æschylus direct matters, as Wagner would like to do, singer, poet, and stage-manager, all in one. That Wagner should lay especial stress upon the present development of machinery, and that he should, at the same time, oppose so bitterly the fact of the orchestra's being visible, is not of any very great importance.

The performances in the Oberammergau, combined with the model representations at Munich, during the Exhibition year, may convey an idea of what Wagner desires. What is the objection? Nothing, but the prominence given by the author to himself, and which was not necessary in such a degree. In truth, it would certainly be delightful to see the works of our best masters performed with the best resources of Germany. To forget Wagner would be an act of injustice; his value will secure him a place. . . . To enter at length upon a consideration of such model performances as Wagner wants, with their conditions, results, etc., would here be out of place. Such performances are, at any rate, possible. That they would be only an artificial phenomenon, and have to struggle against all the disfavour of something extorted and commanded; that the sun of patronage, on which reliance is placed, at any rate, at the outset, is very uncertain, and moreover, very liable to go down, every one is aware; but bold resolute action, as Wagner very justly observes, can overcome and change a great deal.

With regard to the musical portion of the performance, there are many points on which we have our doubts. In the first place, we must observe that we really do not know why these poems, with the exception of certain scenes, should be set to music at all. They are planned and mostly carried out with epic breadth: so completely carried out, indeed, that it is impossible that very much can be left for the musician to do. Shall an engraving executed with the greatest minuteness be painted over when finished? We have our doubts as to whether a poem thus treated, especially in the second and third piece, is a fit theme for music. We shall not believe it is, till Wagner has practically proved such to be the case. In our opinion, an opera-book must resemble the drawing which forms the foundation of a picture. The charcoal marks the outline and the prominent points, but it is the colour which fills up the outline and produces the complete work. It is advantageous to make a finished drawing for the picture, and to throw in the light and shade, as well as any other requisite details, but it is not this sketch which is painted over. In this respect, Wagner's work is complete, as we have already said, looking upon it as poetry; but, in our opinion, as a general rule, poems do not make good opera-books. The theory, which requires the highest finish and exhaustive treatment of a text intended for music, is altogether incorrect. Let the text have a good outline, and let that outline be filled up by the music; such, according to us, is the way to produce a good opera.

We cannot comprehend how Wagner intends to keep up the interest on the part of the audience during the four pieces. That which, when considered epically, or read, is admirable, may prove very monotonous when performed on the stage. Who would doubt the power of music? But how music is to animate the negotiations between Wotan and Fricka, with reference to Wotan's partiality for absenting himself from home; how it is to animate the disputes with the giants, as to the castle they have built, the gold, and the ring; how it is to transform into an opera-book the passages from the mythology; the long conversations of the Walkürres; the long process of forging the sword; and Siegfried's monologues, Wagner himself must teach us He is a composer of considerable talent, and his music always touched our heart. We entertain no doubt of his power in itself, but we would warn him from attempting things for which his strength does not seem adapted. The fact of setting a goodly portion of the poem to music is, in our eyes, as we have already said, a piece of extravagant musical wastefulness.

We should like here to ask once more the old question, how the gods are to be bodily represented? We might be referred to Lessing in the *Laocoon*, when he speaks of pictorial pourtrayal. The Greeks availed themselves on the stage of the cothurnus and the mask. Will Wagner have recourse to these? We should not be astonished if he had.

With regard to the placing of the opera upon the stage, we might at times almost come to the conclusion that Wagner was in joke; but, after all, difficulties of this description are to be surmounted with plenty of money, and a friendly feeling on the part of the public, inducing them not to laugh when the dragon fights with his tail, as they usually laugh at grand battles, and if the artist who plays the mountain-spirit, and the fair individuals who represent the Rhine Daughters, will go through an assiduous course of instruction from acrobats and dancing-mistresses. The poet, it is true, need not trouble himself too much about difficulties of this description. If they must be overcome, they must be. The "must" is, certainly, a debateable point. Admirable feats of artistic strength may turn out highly prejudicial to art. The changes of scene required, reminding one of Moses before Pharaoh, have a touch of Bosco's Hall of Magic about them. We think of the recently patented ghosts, when we read of the Walkürres with the corpses of the slain flung over their saddle-bows. We would, also, direct attention to the fact, as unsuited for representation, that every thing turns upon a ring, which the spectator cannot see at all, or only imperfectly; an armlet would, we should say, be preferable. With regard to many difficulties and monstrosities, such, for instance, as the transformation of the "Tarnkappe," the dragging away of the treasure, the singing dragon, and so on, we fear that, if well managed and well carried out, they will be attended with pernicious results. They might give rise to a taste for magical farces. But, it is true, an author cannot trouble himself as to whether his works will have such a result. His endeavour is to bring forward advantageously what he feels; his path leads to the goal that is present to his mind; laughter and ridicule—and what might we not ridicule?—must not confuse him; the shouts of the multitude urge him forward, but do not turn him aside. Whoever wishes to advance against the usual current, must not pay much attention to even the best meant advice, because the latter only too often advocates the advisability of turning round, and swimming with the stream. A person who advises thus does not understand a genius.

An immense deal more might be said, as a matter of course, about a work like the *Ring des Nibelungen*, so full of intention, even the preface to which, proves its author so ready to engage his opponents; but we will content ourselves with the few observations we have already made. Nothing will afford us greater satisfaction than to find, as we hope we shall find, that our words are not distorted by that party-spirit, which, unfortunately, disfigures nearly all the discussions for or against Wagner*.

ITALIAN MUSICAL AFFAIRS.

NICE, *October 17th.*

Since it is my province to send you a faithful account of Musical affairs in *Italy*, I trust that I shall not be deemed to be trespassing on the ground of another if I send you some news from a place which now belongs to France—for although it is said the Nizzards themselves desired the annexation, I confess that I have a fellow feeling with Garibaldi, who, during the celebrated dispute between him and Cavour in the Chamber of Deputies, in the spring of 1861, on this subject, exclaimed—"Mia patria non può essere che l'Italia—Io non posso essere ch' un Italiano."—Nice is much changed since it has passed into the hands of the French. Innumerable hotels, cercles and cafés have sprung up—handsome promenades have been laid out, and in fact every thing that could have been done has been done to give it the character of a French watering-place—except the establishment of *cafés chantants*, which, *Deo gratias*, have not yet found a place here. Indeed, although the majority of his Imperial Majesty's subjects vastly prefer the romances and *chansons comiques* full of "doubles entendres," to the charming melodies of Bellini and Donizetti, still, I am inclined to give the present generation of Nizzards credit for possessing a sufficiently Italian taste for music to be unwilling to accept such rubbish as usually constitutes the bill of fare at such places of entertainment; than which, really the ballads which are so indiscriminately scattered throughout the English operas of the present day are

* In order not to prove false to the principles advocated by our paper, we are compelled by the above work, and the notice upon it, to make the following observations. We agree, in many respects, with the esteemed author of the notice, but should like to measure the work by another standard. That which he "admires" in Wagner's "poem," we feel inclined at the most to recognise only as original; that which he, in a partial and half exculpatory spirit, represents as unimportant scruples, we should feel inclined to regard as unconditional censure directed against the very essence of the work. His opinion, for instance, concerning what an opera-book ought to be, is quite correct, but it implicitly contains the condemnation of Wagner's operatic theory.—ED. RECENSIONEN.

little better, in a musical point of view. In addition to the "theatre" (devoted to the performance of Comedies and Vaudevilles) which is found in every French town, Nice prides itself on the possession of a handsome Opera house, called the Théâtre Imperial, to which the annexation has brought its changes as well as elsewhere. First of all, the prices are doubled; the Platea, the favorite promenade and lounge in all Italian theatres, is done away with, and converted into half-a-dozen rows of comfortable stalls and a regular "parterre," which change has given a very Frenchy appearance to the house. The Prefet (as important a personage in a French town as the Lord Mayor in the city of London) has issued a list of rules for the maintenance of good order and discipline, two of which I annex for the edification of your readers.

No. 4. "*Fischi* (Hisses) can on no account be allowed; but should any singer be unworthy of this "respettabile pubblico," the Prefet will exercise his power of preventing the appearance of such a singer, and may compel the manager to close the theatre until an acceptable substitute shall be found."

No. 7. "Singers are not permitted to accede to encores, except under peculiar circumstances; but if from such a cause the performance be prolonged to midnight, a fine of 40 francs will be inflicted, for which the chef d'orchestre will be liable."—Did such rules exist in our own country, I think the powers of the Prefet might oftentimes be exercised with advantage, and doubtless the encoring system would soon wear out. The conductors would take care of that, and for one Mr. Costa would see that he was never fined. The opera season here opened a few nights since with *Attila*. Verdi is in as much request here as in England. He is not perfect, (who is?); but that he is a great composer is unquestionable. The power of genius alone could have acquired for him the success which has attended his works nearly throughout every nation in Europe and the great capitals of the two Americas, where his operas are even more popular than in this hemisphere. Since there is no doubt that Verdi *attracts*, the manager was quite right in at once appealing to the public with one of his operas; but the choice of *Attila* was unwise, as it is one of his weakest; and all the principal singers had parts for which they were unsuited. Mme. Franchi-Cappello, the *prima donna*, has a good voice, sympathetic rather than powerful, sings better than many ladies with more reputation, and doubtless in parts such as Lucia and Amina would shine as an actress; but she is sadly wanting in power and energy; the two things most requisite for the representative of Odabella. In the war song, which Cruvelli some years ago rendered popular in England, Mme. Franchi showed a somewhat remarkable facility of execution, and received well merited applause. Sig. di Benedetto, the tenor, has a pleasing voice and phrases remarkably well—indeed so well that he made me regret that I am unable to stay to hear him in a part more suited to his capabilities, for, in the present dearth of tenors, a man with a not unpleasant voice, and one who can really *sing*, should be welcomed. Sig. Coliva has a baritone voice admirably adapted to give effect to the vigorous style of Verdi, but sadly uncultivated. He is however quite young and has a good presence, and with study I believe may in time attain a high position in his profession. Sig. Legri-Leggara, who once had a good voice, but now is decidedly *passé*, sang the part of Attila, on whom the lion's share of the music devolves, which in the present case was unfortunate, as he is not much above mediocrity, and seems to have a peculiar gift of singing flat; and in England you have lately had a sufficient number of Bertrams, Giorgios, (Puritani), etc., with this defect, to know the immense disadvantage to an opera when one of the chief representatives is a cracked bass. The very unmistakeable "fischi" which, on more than one occasion, greeted M. Leggara certainly warrant a supposition that the ears of the "serjents de ville," placed at the entrance of the pit to enforce the rules of M. le Prefet, had been rendered impervious to sound, by the same process as the eyelids of *douaniers* are closed, in as much as the hissing was wholly unregarded.

I should not forget to mention that the great hit of the evening was made by Coliva and Leggara, in the duo "L'Italia è mia," which in noise even excels its rival in *I Puritani*, "Suoni la tromba." I must do the singers the justice to say that they exerted themselves to the utmost, and really sang *magnificently*, and though, doubtless, there were many among the audience in whom the enthusiasm this duet aroused might be attributed to the patriotic character of the scene, yet the singers must have their due, and they were decidedly instrumental in raising the real Italian *furore*, which the music excited. *La Cenerentola* has since been given; and not only was the first performance of this opera interesting on account of the *début* of two singers of the greatest promise, but it was rendered doubly attractive by the *rentrée* of Signor Varese, who has not appeared in public for two or three years. Of this admirable singer I must say a few words, as, although to all acquainted with the musical history of the last twenty-five years, he is well known, doubtless some of your readers now hear his name for the first time. Signor Varese, this side of the Alps, is considered just what Signor Ronconi is on the other, the greatest lyric artist of the day. Indeed, in Rigoletto, among *conoscenti*, there are differences of opinion as to whom the palm should be awarded. Many maintain that, on the whole, Signor Varese's representation of the Court Jester is even a more finished performance than the almost unrivalled one of Ronconi. I should mention that it was for Varese that *Linda*, *Maria di Rohan*, *Il Furioso*, and other works, were expressly written; and of the many pleasing reminiscenes of his long artistic career, there is nothing on which he so much prides himself as the high estimation in which he was held by Donizetti. Although but little now remains of the magnificent organ, for which some of the most lovely melodies ever written by the celebrated master just named were first destined, considering his age, the quality of his voice is something extraordinary, and he still sings with as truthful intonation as he did ten years ago. He certainly can be cited as a proof of what a noted French critic has asserted—(Berlioz, I believe)—"Les chanteurs d'anjourd'hui crient autant qu'ils ont de voix, et à quarante ans ne chantent plus, tandis que les Tamburini, et les chanteurs de cet époche là chanteut encore à faire ravir." By his performance of Dandini, Varese proved himself to be what Italy has always acknowledged him, a consummate artist; but, I believe it is necessary to see him in tragedy to be able to estimate his great powers at their just value. I am sorry that time does not permit me to remain here for the production of *Un Ballo in Maschera*, in which opera he is said to be "*sommo*."

Mdlle. Ferni, who made her debût in *La Cenerentola*, possesses a contralto voice of excellent quality, great power, and extensive compass. Her singing is distinguished by great tenderness and purity; but, although her cadences are always executed with the greatest care and taste, and betoken the excellent school in which she has studied, her love for embellishing Rossini's music is to be condemned, and should be overcome. Ferni is not yet a perfect mistress of her art, but she gives abundant proofs of having studied in a very excellent school; indeed, for the last six months, Varese, considering her to be a singer of more than ordinary promise, has been assisting her in her studies with his superior judgment and knowledge. She made a most favorable impression on the audience; and, in the *rondo* finale, introduced a series of executive marvels which took every hearer by surprise, and brought down the curtain amid plaudits of delight and admiration—the brilliancy of her execution as much exceeding that of most other Italian contraltos as the light of the planet Venus exceeds the twinkling of a fixed star. Signor Cantoni, who also made his *début* on this occasion, has a charming tenor voice, and exhibits such wondrous facility and taste in executing the *roulades* with which *Cenerentola* abounds, that he promises to become, if he is not already, the best Rossinian tenor that has appeared since Calzolari. In addition to his vocal abilities, he has the advantage of a free and unembarrassed action; and his features, person, and appearance, bear that impress of *bon ton* especially desirable in a tenor. How Mr. Mapleson, in his annual researches after talent, has overlooked Cantoni, I know not. Signor S. Ronconi, who sung at Her Majesty's during Mr. Smith's memorable campaign, was Don Magnifico, and by his artistic singing and genuine humour, added considerably to the general excellence of, on the whole, one of the most satisfactory performances of Rossini's charming opera that I ever remember; for I must not omit to mention that the orchestra here is superior to what one would expect in so small a town.

Oct. 22.—I am just leaving for Genoa, whence I hope to forward you some more news, and have now only time to add that the celebrated Madame Galletti has just passed through *en route* for Lisbon, where her *début* in *Norma* is looked forward to with high expectations.

A. S. C.

[Our pleasant and always welcome Correspondent will pardon, we are sure, some curtailments in his interesting letter, which were inevitable.—Ed: M. W.]

MUSIC IN BERLIN.

(*From our own Correspondent.*)

A fig for dates. I like them neither edibly nor chronologically. To my palate, they are mawkish; to my memory, stumbling-blocks. Allow me, therefore, to forget the precise date on which I wrote my last letter. Some time has elapsed since then, I know, but I have not been indifferent to your interests. I have been a careful observer of every thing that has occurred in the domain of music here, and I will now proceed to give you a concise and faithful account of all events worth chronicling.

I will commence, as usual, with the Royal Operahouse. Nicolai's Comic Opera, *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*—Anglice, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—has been very successfully revived, with Madlle. Lucca as Frau Fluth (Mrs. Ford). Apropos of this work, a writer i the *Neue Berliner Musik-Zeitung*, gives us the following anecdote, which, though not of great importance abstractedly, possesses, on ac-

count of its connection with a production so extremely popular all over Germany, a sufficient amount of the fly-in-amber kind of interest to justify me in repeating it. "It was in the summer of 1846, at Vienna," says my German *confrère*, "that the author of this notice, in company with a friend, made up his mind to go to the Theater an der Wien. On reaching the theatre, however, we found that, on account of the indisposition of one of the artists, the performance would not take place. As we were about to return home, Otto Nicolai, then conductor at the Imperial Operahouse, met us, he, like ourselves, having come to hear the opera which had been postponed. The weather was cold and rainy. It was impossible to spend the evening out of doors, so we thankfully accepted Nicolai's proposal to go and drink a cup of tea at his house. In the course of our conversation concerning theatres and music, Nicolai informed us that he was engaged on an opera entitled *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*. After some little pressing, he showed us what he had already sketched out—nearly half the first act. We did not hear the entire opera till three years subsequently (1849) in Berlin, and, despite the objections we had occasion to make to the *libretto*, we could not help confessing that the field of comic opera, so little cultivated in Germany, was certainly enriched by the production of the work. The defects in the book (which contains so few things for music to turn to advantage) were very skilfully concealed by the composer, taking melody being introduced wherever the subject fell off in interest. Nicolai's musical motives are not eminently original, but he knows how to employ them in a highly talented manner, and with great practical knowledge of the theatre. In this, he is materially assisted by his acquaintance with singing and with the stage. The singers have plenty of opportunities for displaying their voices in broad cantilenas and passages well calculated for fluent execution. The composer was always ready to admit that he gained his ability to write in this manner during his residence in Italy (where he produced a three-act opera: *Il Templario*, written quite in the Italian style, and successfully performed, shortly after 1840, by the Italian company of the old Königstadt Theatre). Thus we need not be astonished that the first finale of the *Lustigen Weiber* is vocally so effective, the voices being employed for this broad concerted piece completely in the Italian style. It is true that the composer never deserts his German train of sentiment or his German engagements—he is, if we are not mistaken, one of Zelter's pupils—and thus we have a work, which, after having been played at all German Theatres, has again given proof of its decided vitality. We cannot refrain from regretting that the composer, who died in May, 1849, should not have lived to see its success, especially at the present moment."—How is it that this work has never been produced in England? The subject is one that would strongly appeal to the taste of an English public, whom it would interest I should say, if merely as showing how it has been treated by a German composer and a German librettist. It strikes me that the eminently national management who open a theatre principally for the disinterested purpose of affording a home to English composers, and not at all for their own individual profit, and who carry out their patriotic and praiseworthy design by performing *The Crown Diamonds*, *Le Domino Noir*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *La Sonnambula*, *Dinorah*, and—last *and* least—the *Marriage of Georgette*, might very well add to the list *Die Lustigen Weiber*, without being more open than they now are to the charge of having departed rather considerably from the disinterested purpose before mentioned, and heralded forth to the world with a wonderful flourish of promissory trumpets. But to return to my muttonso. Nicolai's opera has been very carefully got up on the present occasion. Madlle. Lucca was especially good as Mrs. Ford, singing most admirably, and infusing into her acting an amount of humour for which I had not given her credit. She was well supported by the rest of the company. The orchestra, too, under Herr Taubert, was excellent. You may judge how attractive the performance was when I inform you that a great number of places, bought up by the professional touters, I suppose they call themselves ticket-agents, were sold at the doors of the theatre for more than double the regular prices.

Another noteworthy event in our operatic annals is the production of Gustav Schmidt's three-act opera, *La Réole*, which had already triumphantly undergone the ordeal of public criticism at Dresden, Brunswick, Breslau, and Cassel. It was a success, and deservedly so, because, though certainly not a *chef-d'œuvre*, it contains some highly pleasing and effective pieces, and displays no mean knowledge in the composer of what is and what is not adapted for the stage, a knowledge of which too many composers—and Heaven knows how many authors—notwithstanding their undoubted talent, are lamentably and miserably deficient.

The various artists charged with the principal characters exerted themselves to the utmost, and received their due meed of applause. Among them I may mention Mad. Jachmann-Wagner, who consented to sing the part of Catharina, although she has left opera for the spoken or more correctly, perhaps, "pumped-up" drama, considering the inflated, unnatural, monotonously see-saw style of declamation patronized by certain actors and actresses both here and in England. The composer was called on the first night, since when, by the way, he has very sensibly allowed the management to employ the "P. K." For the benefit of those among your readers who do not know what those initials signify, I beg to say they stand for "Pruning-Knife," an instrument much dreaded and abhorred, as a rule, by all composers. Herr Gustav Schmidt was quite right, however, and his opera "goes" far better in consequence of the judicious pruning to which it has been subjected. Indeed it has proved such a decided hit that Herr Gustav Schmidt must be in the highest possible spirits and good humour, and forget the very natural disappointment and vexation he experienced when Herr Woworsky, who plays Henry IV. of France, that "vert galant," took it into his head to be ill on the night first announced for the production of the work.

Mad. Köster, who holds the rather anomalous position of "honorary member" of the Royal Opera Company, a position implying, it would seem, that she is allowed to emerge from her retirement, and sing a few times every year, has made her appearance in *Fidelio*. For my own part, I am of opinion that when a "well-graced actor," actress, or vocalist, quits the stage, he, or she, should not be always returning to it. The system is bad. If artists leave the scenes of their former triumphs spontaneously, they should not again—

"Revisit thus the glimpses of the—float,"

As Hamlet does *not* say, and stultify themselves by proving they do not know their own minds. If they have resigned the exercise of their profession in consequence of the decay of their powers, then their artistic resuscitation is painful to, even if it is not disrespectful towards, the public, who pay to hear or see excellence, and not the remains of it. The next novelty at the Royal Operahouse will be Benedict's *Rose von Erin* or *Lily of Killarney*. I suppose the celebrated Anglo-German will come over to superintend the rehearsals in person.

At the Victoria Theatre, Sig. Merelli has been doing wonderfully, of course, with Madlle. Adelina Patti. Though the prices have been raised, the houses have been crammed to suffocation. It is the general opinion that the *Senorita* has even improved since her last appearance here, and the enthusiasm is at fever heat. How she sang, I need not tell you; what she sang, I will proceed to unfold. Her first character was that of Rosina, in *Il Barbiere*. She afterwards appeared in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Don Pasquale*, and a "miscellaneous" entertainment, a sort of hodge-podge, the ingredients of which, as far as she was concerned, were the opening air of Rosina, the duet with Figaro, the last scenes from the *Sonnambula*, and Zerlina's scenes from *Don Giovanni*. When will managers abandon the hateful practice of giving these Vandalistic medleys, so unjust to the composers, the "*disjecta membra*," of whose works are thus torn, wrenched, and rent from the body to which they belong, and so aggravating, tantalising, and unsatisfactory to the public? As I suppose, that even you, O, my respected Editor, will not undertake to decide this question off-hand, I shall *not* pause for a reply, but continue my letter. The other members of Signor Merelli's company do not call for any especial notice. If they did, by the way, and in their very loudest voice, they would not get it. I must except, however, M. Naudin, who came in for a fair share of applause. His voice is not as good as it was, but he manages it with skill, and his style, though unmistakeably and somewhat oppressively French, is characterised by energy and feeling. I have seen and heard many worse representatives of Edgardo, even though their names were starred at the top of the bills. I have, however, seen and heard some better, and, among those "some," I must mention Mario and Sims Reeves. It would be unjust of me to conclude, without stating that, in Signor Orsini, Signor Merelli possesses a most talented conductor.

We have had several very good concerts. Among them I may mention those given by Herren Englehardt, Hellmich, and Zurn; the first Subscription Concert, this year, of the Frauen-Verein, for the benefit of the Gustav-Adolph-Stiftung; the first of the Series of Symphony-Soirées of the Royal Chapel; the first concert of the Society of the Friends of Music, and the first Soirée for Pianoforte Music, of Herr Hans von Bülow. As my letter has already extended to a considerable length, I will not, at present, enter into details, but you shall shortly have a full and particular account of all that was worth noticing at the above concerts, from your's ever,

VALE.

AMSTERDAM.—The first popular concert took place on the 1st inst., under the direction of Herr Verhulst. The programme included. Beethoven's Sinfonia Eroica; Gade's Fourth Symphony; an Overture by Mehul; and Mendelssohn's "Meeresstille und Gluckliche Fahrt." The next grand work performed will be Handel's Oratorio of *Joshua*. There will be no German opera this winter, but Signor Merelli will bring his Italian company, with Mesdlles. Trebelli and Artôt.

MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

ST. JAMES'S HALL.

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIXTH CONCERT.

FIFTH CONCERT OF THE SIXTH SEASON,

On MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 30, 1863.

FIRST APPEARANCE OF

MADAME ARABELLA GODDARD.

LAST APPEARANCE BUT TWO OF

M. LOTTO.

PROGRAMME.

PART I.

GRAND SEPTET, in E flat, Op. 20, for Violin, Viola, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, Violoncello and Double Bass . . . *Beethoven.*
MM. Lotto, H. Webb, Lazarus, C. Harper, Winterbottom, C. Severn, and Paque.

SONG, "Nasce al bosco." . . . . . *Handel.*
Mr. Renwick.

SONG, "The Lark." . . . . . *Glinka.*
Miss Emily Spiller.

SONATA, in E major, for Pianoforte alone . . . . . *Mendelssohn.*
Madame Arabella Goddard.

PART II.

SONATA, in E flat, Op. 48, for Pianoforte and Clarinet . . . *C. M. von Weber.*
Madame Arabella Goddard and Mr. Lazarus.

SONG, "Chloe in Sickness." . . . . . *W. S. Bennett.*
Mr. Wilbye Cooper.

SECOND MORCEAU DE CONCERT for Violin, with Pianoforte Accompaniment—M. Lotto . . . . . *Vieuxtemps.*

SONG, "Let me list to the billows." . . . . . *Old English Ditty.*
Miss Emily Spiller.

QUABTET, in B flat, No. 78, for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello . . . . . *Haydn.*
M. Lotto, Herr L. Ries, Mr. H. Webb and M. Paque.

Conductor - MR. BENEDICT.

To commence at Eight o'clock precisely.

NOTICE.—It is respectfully suggested that such persons as are not desirous of remaining till the end of the performance can leave *either before the commencement of the last instrumental piece, or between any two of the movements*, so that those who wish to hear the whole may do so without interruption. Between the last vocal piece and the Quartet for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello, an interval of five minutes will be allowed.

Sofa Stalls, 5s.; Balcony, 3s.; Admission, 1s.; To be had of Mr. Austin, at the Hall, 28 Piccadilly; Messrs. Chappell & Co., 50 New Bond Street, &c., &c.

MADAME ARABELLA GODDARD informs her Pupils and Friends that she has returned to Town for the winter season. 26 Upper Wimpole Street, Cavendish Square.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

The Office of the MUSICAL WORLD *is Removed to* Duncan Davison and Co.'s, 244, Regent Street (*corner of Little Argyll Street*), *where subscriptions, advertisements and all communications intended for the Publishers or the Editor will henceforth be received.*

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To Publishers and Composers—*All Music for Review in* The Musical World *must henceforth be forwarded to the Editor, care of* Messrs. Duncan Davison & Co., 244, *Regent Street. A List of every Piece sent for Review will appear in* The Musical World.

To Concert Givers.—*No Benefit-Concert, or Musical Performance, except of general interest, unless previously Advertised, can be reported in* The Musical World.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Moscheles (Leipsic).—The review of M. David's work is in the hands of our diligent translator, Mr. J. V. Bridgeman, and shall appear next week. Our greetings to the great and esteemed artist, and our thanks for his communication.

The Musical World.

LONDON: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1863.

Stuttgardt, Nov. ——

AS is the case every year, during the summer all music of an elevated character has been at a complete standstill; whoever desired to hear any music, save that of the birds among the trees, was obliged to be contented with the mediocre performances of the military orchestra, for, as far as regards the pieces interpersed with songs, and the vaudevilles, produced at the neighbouring Cannstädter Sommer-Theater, any person fond of unrestrained merriment could, it is true, find means to amuse himself thoroughly; but as to speaking seriously of "music," in conjunction with these entertainments, that is altogether out of the question. With the first autumn month, September, all this is changed; the Opera commences the very first week, and the first harbingers of the concert-season do not keep us long waiting. This year we have, as yet, been spared all virtuosos, and the concerts of Herr Wilhelm Krüger, pianist; of Herr Jean Becker, the violinist, from Paris; and of Herr Fohmann, hornplayer, and member of the royal orchestra, which are announced for the second week in October, stand the first on the list. Yet, the season has made an admirable beginning with the performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, got up by the Association for Classical Sacred Music. We are fain to see in this beginning a happy augury, the more so, because, on the other hand, on account of the continued illness of Herr Goltermann, the leader, and of the projected journey of Herr Pruckner, the pianist, to Paris, the Quartet and Chamber-Music Concerts, if they come off at all, will scarcely bear comparison with those of last year.

With regard to the above-mentioned work by Beethoven, namely, his Mass in D major, it had never been previously performed here; in order to render such a performance possible, the co-operation of many distinct component parts was necessary, and, if we reflect that the members of the Association for Classical Sacred Music, who executed the choruses, are amateurs, we may, considering the serious musical difficulties to be overcome, form some notion of the ticklish task which Professor Faisst, the director, had to get through. The more worthy of commendation is the fact, therefore, that both at the first performance on the 22nd September, as well as at the second, on the 29th of the same month, the choruses went with imposing steadiness. Though the members of the Association were reinforced, however, by other amateurs, they could not always make themselves heard through the orchestral masses, but this was because the vocal parts, despite of all that had been done, were still too weakly supported; this may, however, be remedied, perhaps, at some future Subscription Concert, when, if the Mass is repeated, the Association will be strengthened by the chorus from the Theatre. The solos were not particularly well given. The orchestra was, on

the whole, satisfactory, though not so satisfactory as it might have been. Notwithstanding this, the performance, taken all in all, produced a deep effect, no small share of the credit being due to Professor Faisst for his indefatigable exertions in getting up and conducting the work.

Since, as we have already remarked, the virtuosos have not yet made their appearance, and the Subscription Concerts do not begin before November, we are compelled to pass at once from the Church to the Theatre, where, as it strikes us, a rather unsuccessful attempt has been made, by the production of Salieri's *Axur*, to obtain the right of citizenship for music which may have made a sensation in its day, but cannot be regarded as classical, or as a model for all ages. Not that we would deny the many good qualities of *Axur*; such a course is far from our thoughts, and we willingly acknowledge that the hearer may be very agreeably affected by a host of pleasing and attractive melodies, some of which are easily caught, as well as by a colouring, on the whole, highly characteristic of the various personages; by a dramatic action, which, though deficient in unity of conception, increases in interest up to the end; and, especially by the Mozart-Gluck tone which generally predominates. Yet, however agreeable certain pieces—airs, duets, and a charming masked-trio, comically treated—may be; however much we may be moved by a *preghiera*, sung first by a bass and then by a contralto; however refreshing for our feelings it may be once more to enjoy music free from the deafening means of effect employed in our most recent operas, we must not overlook the fact that many of the melodies are purportless, nay, even trivial; that the exceedingly frequent recitative appears as though it would never finish; that most of the characters are unable to awake any deep sympathy; and that the work, considered as a whole, does not reach the imposing grandeur of the productions of Mozart or Gluck. We must not forget, it is true, that we did not hear it in the form given it by the composer, with the original instrumentation, rather too simple, perhaps, but, without a doubt, well calculated to develope the vocal parts. Though the modern adapters, Lindpainter, and, after his death, which occurred when he was in the middle of his task, Eckert, have, on the whole, employed a praiseworthy moderation, and only seldom allowed the orchestra to predominate so as to cover the voices of the singers—as is so often the case in modern opera—it was not possible completely to preserve the original character of the work, and it may fairly be asked whether it was for the interest of art to present a composition decked out in a modern garb instead of in its primitive shape, and to leave the hearer to decide for himself which is the original part and which the additions. As far as we ourselves are concerned, we feel inclined to assert that, when an opera by Salieri, Cimarosa, Monsigny, or any of their contemporaries, is revived, the greatest possible respect should be paid to the score, and the opportunity be seized of once more accustoming the ear, spoilt by modern music, to more simple food. Such a course is to be recommended if only to preserve vocal art, and in the interest of those singers who still know how to sing without screaming. Even if the instrumentation appeared too simple, every educated person would willingly renounce the modern habit of being satiated by the orchestra, for the purpose of hearing, as the composer imagined and felt it, a work which marked an epoch in its day. We will not enter into the question whether there is any real occasion for a German theatre to rout up Salieri, and whether, if a selection is made from our old treasures, attention should not first be directed to those works by Mozart and Gluck, some of which (as is the case here with *Così fan Tutte*, *Idomeneo*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Orpheus*, and *Armida*) have long been forgotten, and others not heard, at least, for a considerable period. The reception of this quasi-novelty—*Axur* had not been performed in Stuttgardt for about thirty years—by the public, who, on the first night of the revival, were tolerably remarkable for their absence, was but lukewarm; only two or three pieces were applauded, and those, principally owing to the excellence of the singers; the overture, finales, and choruses being passed over without a hand. Yet, everything was done to raise the work; the cast was all that could be desired, the scenery, dresses, and processions were brilliant, and the zeal of the artists in studying their parts had been most satisfactory.

We have had a very excellent performance of *Die Zauberflöte*. Herr Eckert conducted with more care than he usually does. The *tempo* was, as an exception, not hurried, or, at least, only seldom, and even the orchestral accompaniment was, in many respects, surprisingly discreet. It is a pity that Herr Eckert does not oftener afford well-meant criticism an opportunity of praising him, but that, since the beginning of the new theatrical year, by indolence bordering upon downright idleness; by overbearing behaviour towards certain members of the company, especially some of the first female members; and by a too sovereign contempt for public opinion, he should be pursuing the road to an inevitable catastrophe, which, as everyone forsees, will end in his voluntary or compulsory departure hence, and which causes the impartial observer to regret most acutely that so thorough a musician is so incapable of filling his place at the head of an Operahouse. By continually keeping aloof from the singers, male and female, to whom he is literally inaccessible, and by the positive insults he allows himself to indulge in, some of which reach the ear of the public, Herr Eckert has nearly altogether lost his popularity, once so great. Since his declaration—on the occasion of the concert about to be given by Herr Krüger, the pianist—"If the Marlow sings, I shall not conduct," appeared in a public paper, the man who, a year previously, was such a favourite, has become the object of general indignation. We will not inquire what his motives are, or whether any domestic influence is at work; the conclusion that our Opera cannot permanently go on in this way is certain, and it is absolutely necessary that something decided must at once be done to remedy such a state of affairs.

"AFTER WALLACE, BALFE; and after BALFE, WALLACE." This is the creed, and should be the motto, of the directors of the Royal English Opera. Every one remembers the Joe Miller story of the British sailor, who, on being asked, if he had three wishes given him, what they would be, answered, "First, all the rum in the world; secondly, all the baccy in the world; and thirdly (this after some consideration), a little more rum." Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. Harrison would, I have an idea, offer some comparison to the British tar, if they had three wishes granted them, by expressing a desire to have, first, all the Balfe in the world; then, all the Wallace in the world; and, finally, a little more Balfe. Have I not a right to establish this analogy? Do not the directors single out those two talented and popular composers every year, as if they were paid servants of the establishment, and accept their works whether they be good, bad, or indifferent? I have not a word to say against Mr. Balfe, or Mr. Wallace, and could say much in favor of their operas, if I liked to be complimentary, which

I do not. But, I think, it is very hard that other native composers should be ignored season after season, and that the two clever Irish musicians should alone be selected to uphold the fortunes of the National Opera. There would not be even in this arrangement so much to complain of, if the composers were permitted to think for themselves, and to have a voice in the selection of subjects for their operas, and of the writers who should treat their subjects. But the directors, who really know nothing whatever of the dramatic or literary merit of a work, have long taken the affair into their own hands, have ordered their librettos, and made choice of their own poets, with a view, peradventure, to the more immediately securing the copyright of the words. My belief—and I am not singular therein—is that Mr. Balfe and Mr. Wallace have been sacrificed of late years by having books given to them from which even inspiration would fail to strike out a spark, and which left art little or nothing to work upon. Neither of the composers is an abstract genius, and, consequently, each requires a decided basis upon which to raise his musical superstructure. Has *The Desert Flower*, or *Blanche de Nevers*—not to go further back—presented such a basis? I think not. The subject of one is strange, grotesque and unnatural; of the other, complicated, erratic and pointless; while both have been treated by the English transcribers most lamely and impotently. Neither of these operas, I affirm, is a fair test of the composer's talents, who, with a better written and more interesting libretto, would, no doubt, have written better and more attractive music. Thus, notwithstanding the special favor conferred on them by the directors of the Royal English Opera, our two most popular composers are not so deeply indebted as they may perhaps imagine, for, though they are prefered to all other composers, and produce their operas irrespective of considerations as to their intrinsic worth—thereby treating the public in the most contemptuous manner—managers dictate to them what they are to write, or lay before them the book of words to be set to music after a fashion to please singers, directors, publishers, and public, regardless of their own feelings, tastes and aspirations. It is a bad system, and can come to no good, when singers are managers and when singing-managers can influence composers in any possible way. What between the desires and enunciations of directors and publishers, the unfortunate writer of an opera is fixed upon the horns of a dilemma, and, in the struggle to gratify both his employers, cannot be said to present any reflection of his own mind. Can music, written under such influences, be said to be the composer's at all?

This year, I believe, will bring to a termination the fortunes of the Royal English Opera—the Royal English Opera under the administration of Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. H. Harrison. Should history descend to chronicle the deeds of the twinned management, this last year will be recorded as that which had been almost entirely sustained by the aid of two composers and one singer. Musical posterity will peruse the page with surprise, and will wonder how our great National operatic establishment could exist and succeed while ignoring all the vocal talent in the country; and how a reputation of any kind could be obtained while prejudice, petty jealousy and ignorance guided the reins of government. The Royal English Opera—the Royal English Opera of Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. H. Harrison—expires without one tear being shed for its loss, or one sigh expended on the accomplishments of the past. Let us hope that talents misapplied, energies misdirected, faults innumerable, and self-confidence unbounded, may serve as beacons to other directors; and that, in the future projection of English Opera, the very last thing mixed up with its destinies will be managers who sing, or singers who manage. So shall there be some hopes for our National operatic establishment. RIPPINGTON PIPE.

P.S.—In my next letter, I shall have a few words to say about Mr. French Flower's new discovery, which, from his own statement, is calculated to cure all diseases of the lungs, and make everybody sing. This is glorious news.

GOLDSCHMIDT *versus* HANDEL.

To the Editor of the MUSICAL WORLD.

SIR,—The performance of Handel's music to Milton's famous poem, *L'Allegro ed il Pensieroso*, on Tuesday evening, at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, merits a passing notice, which you may possibly find space for in your widely circulated journal. The revival of any of Handel's works, which have scarcely been heard by the present generation, cannot but be commended as a step in the right direction by all who are interested in the delightful art of music. During his life time Handel composed no less than 19 Oratorios; of which the Sacred Harmonic Society of London (the most colossal choral association of modern times), only performs about one-half. Independently of these important works, there still remain (in the form of "odes" and "serenatas") many compositions of the highest worth, well known to all cultivated amateurs. Among these it is only necessary to quote *Alexander's Feast*, the *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, *Acis and Galatea*, and *L'Allegro, il Pensieroso ed il Moderato*, which latter has just been performed by our local musical society.

On the re-appearance of Madame Lind Goldschmidt in public, a short time since, her husband determined to revive the work, and it was accordingly performed in London, at St. James's Hall, some months ago, much in the same manner as at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on Tuesday evening. On referring to the programme, we are informed that the work would be preceded by Handel's Grand Concerto in "B." This is evidently an error, as no music by that composer exists in such an unusual key. The concerto in question is in what is termed by musicians the key of "B minor;" the middle movement of which, described as an "*aria*," is a well known "minuet," derived from another source. The whole betrays the great composer's want of fancy in the treatment of the orchestra, as a separate and grand element of musical effect. After this, *L'Allegro ed il Pensieroso* succeeded, as "arranged" for performance by Herr Goldschmidt, whose "arrangement" cannot be viewed with satisfaction by discriminating judges.

It is well known by all conversant with the biography of Handel, that, owing to the limited orchestral resources frequently at his command, he was in the habit of filling in the inner portions of the harmony on the organ, as well as occasionally on the harpsichord. Accordingly, Herr Goldschmidt makes the mistake in the present day of introducing the tinkling sounds of a pianoforte into the score, to the great detriment of the general effect. Unless that instrument predominate entirely, as in a modern pianoforte concerto, its sounds never blend with the constituent parts of the orchestra, so as to produce an agreeable effect. This defect of the instrument was painfully apparent in the lengthy air for soprano, "Sweet bird" (the flute *obbligato* to which must be truly exasperating to modern players). The use also of the organ in portions of the *Allegro* music, was a grave offence against correct taste; and, as Herr Goldschmidt professed to restore the airs to the kind of voice intended by Handel, it may be asked why

the air "Orpheus himself" was transposed a third lower, and sung by a bass, instead of a soprano, as the composer directs? Also, why the air for tenor, "These delights if thou canst give," was deprived of the trumpet *obbligato*, the sounds of a flute being substituted? Also, last but not least, where Handel grasps the sublime at the lines:

"There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voic'd quire below,
In service high and anthems clear!"

Here, the composer directs the use of the organ (after each line sung by the choral force) and it may be reasonably demanded why the instrument was not more nobly employed on the occasion? The few bars played bore a close resemblance to the customary interlude to a village psalm tune; while the great point, after the words

"And let their sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes!"

where Handel directs that an *extempore* display on the organ shall occur, on a subject specially mentioned—was cooly omitted! How will Herr Goldschmidt (or the organist, Mr. Hirst—whichever was the guilty party) excuse the sins of omission and commission at the climax of the work?

The fact is, the delicate and very onerous task of supplementing the orchestration to Handel's oratorios is beyond Herr Goldschmidt's abilities. As a composer of works of any importance, he is entirely unknown to the English public, and a more forcible example of his want of tact could not be cited than that where many of the orchestral chords possess the interval of a fifth, but *not* a third, Herr Goldschmidt has uniformly neglected to supply the latter important interval in his "arrangement." I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant, CROOKSHANK WORST.

Liverpool, King and Beard, November 26.

To the Editor of the MUSICAL WORLD.

SIR,—Men of letters and men of notes are too seldom intimately associated; but it now and then happens that, when they do come together, they are not slow in finding out each others' merits. Because Pope, while affecting to venerate, did not pretend to understand Handel; because Swift saw no difference between Handel and Buononcini beyond what could be expressed through the medium of a lyrical antithesis no more euphonious than "Tweedle dum and Tweedle dee;" because Scott could only remember one tune—"God Save the King" (George IV., with whom the author of *Waverley* had the honor of dining—we doubt if he could have recalled "God Save the Queen"); and (to conclude) because the music of Timotheus only urged Alexander, nicknamed "the Great," to deeds of shame and violence—are these sufficient reasons why there should be an "inseparable barrier" (whatever that may signify) between musicians and those given to intellectual pursuits with which musicians generally are generally (and wrongly) supposed to have no sympathy? Cardanus—the unanticipated possession of whose collected works gave such inaccountable satisfaction to the father of Pisistratus Caxton—says something in his labored treatise, *De Subtilitate*, which I have forgotten. Pomponatius,* too, whom Cardanus frequently quotes, or rather by whom Cardanus is frequently quoted, has a passage in his *De Incantationibus*, which I forget. But Shakspeare and Bacon loved music; while Leonardo da Vinci was, more or less, a great musician. Thus much by the way. My present business is with a dedication. Who that reads the current literature of the day has missed the brilliant series of essays which, under the title of *Caxtoniana*, has been recently contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine*, by Sir E. Bulwer Lytton.* Well, these essays have just been issued, in two handsome volumes, by the eminent publishers well known to either side Tweed, and—*mirabile dictu!* (why *mirabile dictu?*)—they are dedicated, by their illustrious author, to a fiddler. A fiddler! Yes, a fiddler; but that fiddler is Heinrich Ernst. *Lisez plutôt*:—

'TO HEINRICH ERNST.

"MY DEAR ERNST,

"Accept the dedication of these Essays. You will recognise, in some of them, subjects on which I have, not unfrequently, conversed with you and the charming critic who so worthily bears your distinguished name.

"The friendship I have formed with natures so noble as hers and your own has added a new charm to my life; and all who have the privilege to know you will comprehend the affectionate pride with which I inscribe to that friendship this grateful memorial.

"E. B. L.

"*Knebworth, October*, 1863."

The dedication is worthy alike of dedicator and dedicatee. A masterpiece of style, there is no mistaking its genuine heartiness.—I am, Sir, DISHLEY PETERS.

A BRAY FROM AN ASS.

To the Editor of the MUSICAL WORLD.

SIR,—Observing that of your great courtesy, our feathered cousins find expression for their opinions and remarks, in the columns of your justly celebrated journal; I am tempted to hope that you will afford a like indulgence to me—a member of the humble community of the common. We donkeys, Sir, are a musical race, taking a great interest in all matters vocal and instrumental which you are in the habit of discussing in your valued paper, and having our own distinctions of voices much in the same way as your more favored bipeds have yours, with perhaps this difference that whereas we find our basses most difficult of concilliation, you, I am given to understand, are most troubled in the management of your tenors. This however is a distinction without a difference, and we can therefore justly enter into your feelings of disappointment, when we hear that Mr. So-and-so, the eminent tenor, finds himself too indisposedto sing. You are perhaps unaware, Sir, that we have our daybreak concerts at regular seasons of the year, at which the vocalization will bear comparison with that at your principal musical establishment, and at these we occasionally have to lament the compulsory absence of one of our brethren whose services are required elsewhere; but though my vanity, which I trust you will pardon, has induced me to make this remark about the vocal powers of our community, my object in troubling you with this note was neither to detract from the merits of the singing at your great theatre, nor to puff the humble efforts of my own brotherhood; but to ask your favor in enlightening us—an easy task for one so practised in explaining these matters—as to the apparent limited number of singers and composers which, as an English donkey, I grieve to say my country seems to afford. Pardon me, Sir, for again obtruding our species, but I cannot help remarking that our custom, though fraught with certain objections, seems to me to be a more desirable one than that adopted by you. We, as you are perhaps aware, do not confine ourselves to one melody, time or key, but each sings that which pleases him and suits his voice best, thereby obtaining a result which to sufficiently practised ears is at once pleasing and exciting, while you on the other hand sing the notes and interpret the ideas of another man with whose

* Your readers (being musicians) may require to be informed that Pomponatius was a rival of Achillini. They may also (being musicians) require to be informed, who was Achillini. Unfortunately I have neither time nor inclination, just at present, to enlighten them. Enough that Pomponatius, although he writ in Latin, was a dwarf.

* In the essay called *Rhythm in Prose, as Conducive to Precision and Clearness*, there is much to attract the attention and enlist the sympathy of musicians.

mind and feelings you have no sympathy, and, as if that were not sufficiently restrictive, you allow but two of your fellows to decide what music shall be sung and but another couple to sing it. This, Sir, seems to me to be unworthy of the great race of which I as a British quadruped have every right to be proud, hence, my appeal to you the arbitrar of musical controversies. That my opinion is shared by many of your own people I have good reason to believe, for on my attending Mr. William Finch of Westminster at Covent Garden Market in order to assist the transport across the water of certain garden produce which Mr. F. retails at an advanced price, I have frequently heard observations made as to the merits of your two singers, not very complimentary to either of them and couched in such language as you, Sir, would properly decline to admit into the pages of your periodical. I will not here state what the nature of these observations has been, nor who were the parties making them, but I have heard what I have heard, and if those interested should wish to know more about the opinions of the lower stratum of the biped race, or to know on what grounds I object to monopoly, or indeed be in any way curious concerning my sayings or doings, reference can at all times be made with a certainty of attention being paid thereto, to FINCH'S DONKEY.

Clapham Common, November 1863.

—o—

THE CIVIC TRUMPETER.

SIR,—If your correspondent, "Euphonion," will refer to *Agathon, De Fistula Tibia*, iiii., 32 ed., *Tabarinus*, he will find that the piper or trumpeter, who was sometimes then one of the harpers, was not always employed in moderating the orator's tone, but also used to stimulate him when his voice sank too low in pitch. The first mention of a similar custom obtaining in England, at feasts, is in Henry of Malmesbury, who says of Richard II.:—"Nowe whan hee felle a cuppe too lowe, hee wolde have a musicke man hys pype to pytche yt stronge, and to blowe him up agayne. Soe ye musicke man pyped merrye and lowde that alle mennes myte heare."—Your obedient servant,

TOPP PEGGLETON.

—o—

ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA.

On Saturday evening Mr. Balfe's opera, *Blanche de Nevers*, was produced for the first time, and achieved a decided success. The libretto, founded on *The Duke's Motto*, is from the pen of Mr. John Brougham, who, although inexperienced in lyric writing, has done his work ably, more especially as regards the single songs. The laying out of the dialogue for music, in some instances, might have been effected more skilfully, and might have presented less difficulties to the composer. As a first essay, however, Mr. Brougham's libretto may be praised, both for the smoothness of the verses, and the newness of the thoughts, as well as the manner in which the author has steered clear of the Bunn and Fitzball rhythm and measure. The music has done no discredit to Mr. Balfe's reputation. The public will, undoubtedly, miss the traditional ballads of the old form; but they cannot fail to admire the ingenious way in which the composer has avoided the beaten path, more particularly as he has been so successful in his deviations. Besides the solos, almost every one of which was honored with an encore the first night, the audience were delighted with the duet, "Must we part, and part for ever?" (act 2, scene 1)—for soprano and tenor—a most charming and well-voiced composition, and certain to become eminently popular. Some of the choruses are very attractive, of which the most striking are the opening chorus, "What state can compare with the Zingari life," and the chorus of soldiers, "A cup to the soldier's trade, fill high" (act 4, scene 1), both of which have very taking tunes. Of the solos those which seemed to please most were Lagardére's song, "When I think of the days that are gone" (act 1, scene 1); Blanche's air in same scene, "As the mountain streams;" Blanche's ballad, "There is a void within my heart" (act 1, scene last); Lagardére's song, "Wilt thou think of me?" (act 2, scene 1); and the song of Gonzagues, "The old vine tree" (act 4, scene 2). The concerted pieces are not all of equal value; but the Balfian invention and facility are conspicuous in all. Finally, the ballet music is sparkling and characteristic; although that, in the first act—fresh and as light as though it belonged originally to the *Bohemian Girl*—is decidedly to be preferred to that in act the third, which, nevertheless, is more ambitious. This bird's-eye view of the new opera must suffice for the present. The execution was hardly up to the mark of the Royal English opera on the occasion of a first performance. The parts were distributed as follows:—Blanche—Miss L. Pyne; Princess of Gonzagues—Miss Emma Heywood; Zillah—Miss Anna Hiles; Lagardére—Mr. Harrison; Prince of Gonzagues—Mr. Weiss; Philip of Orleans—Mr. St. Albyn; Cocardasse—Mr. H. Corri; Peyrolles—Mr. J. Rouse; Æsop—Mr. Aynsley Cook. Of the singers we shall take another occasion to speak, and merely say that Miss Louisa Pyne sang delightfully; that Mr. Harrison displayed even more than his customary histrionic powers in Captain Lagardére; that Mr. Weiss gave great effect and weight to the part of Gonzagues; and that Miss Emma Heywood, who made her first appearance at Covent Garden, exhibited a very fine contralto voice, and a capital style of singing.

Blanche de Nevers has been played every night during the week.

—o—

A SONG OF OYSTERS.

(IN TWELVE FYTTES.)

Fytte 1.

If ever I feel weak when I go out,
A dozen oysters and a pint of stout
Soon sets me right; and so I make a point
Of taking such before I think of joint.

(*To be continued.*)

—o—

A DIALOGUE.

SCENE—*E. T. Smith's new Café non-chantant.*

Enter WAITER.

WAITER (*tacet*).

Enter MR. AUG MAYHEW.

MR. AUG. MAYHEW—Waiter.

WAITER—Yes, Sir.

MR. AUG. MAYHEW—What's your coffee a cup?

WAITER—Four pence, Sir.

MR. AUG. MAYHEW—A large cup?

WAITER—No, Sir, a small cup.

MR. AUG. MAYHEW—I want a large cup. I take a great deal of coffee. I'll tell you why directly.

WAITER (*pours out a great deal of coffee*).

MR. AUG MAYHEW—And I take a great deal of milk. I'll tell you why directly.

WAITER (*after pouring out a great deal of milk*)—Why, Sir?

MR. AUG. MAYHEW—Because I take a great deal of sugar.

Exit WAITER *for more sugar. Curtain drops.*

ABEL GROGG.

—o—

CHORISTERS.—A return has been obtained respecting the chorister boys of cathedrals and collegiate churches. Their numbers vary from ten to 16, and their duties of course are to attend the two daily services and qualify themselves by practice; and practice in one cathedral is described as occupying an hour and a half of every week-day. The stipends range from 1*l.* to 10*l.* or 15*l.*; but Chester is the only place where they are stated as beginning so low as 1*l.* From Christchurch, Oxford, the return is—"About 38*l.* to choristers." Only 18 churches have sent returns; there is none from Lichfield, Durham, or Winchester, but when the two former made returns to the Cathedral Commission they described the stipends as high, rising at Durham to 27*l.* a year, and a 20*l.* apprentice fee. At several cathedrals there is an apprentice fee on leaving. Choristers receive also education, and in some instances it is stated to be good; but the present return represents that at Windsor and Chichester the choristers are educated "indifferently," and at Westminister "very indifferently by one of the sacrists," though they were to receive board and education in Westminster School. From Carlisle the return is—"A scrambling education at the Cathedral Grammar School." One of the minor canons of Carlisle, Mr. Livingston, states, in his evidence given last summer before the Commons Committee on the Ecclesiastical Commission, that other boys being educated at the school, the hours are such that the choristers cannot get any education worthy of the name, as they are in church or practising for three or four hours. By the foundation, he says, they ought to be provided with lodgings, food, and clothing, but they get neither, and the pay, being only from 3*l.* 3s. to 7*l.* 7s., is so very inadequate that there is great difficulty in getting suitable choristers. The parent has to sign an agreement that the boy cannot be removed until his voice breaks. At Salisbury, Lincoln, and Windsor the choristers are boarded and lodged, but receive no stipend, except 28s. a year at Lincoln.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—The third of the series of winter concerts took place on Saturday. The hall was well filled, although the programme was not very attractive. The vocalists were Madame Rudersdorff and Signor Montelli; solo instrumentalist, M. Lotto. R. Schumann's symt phony in D minor was the first piece on the programme, and, if not thoroughly understood, was capitally played by the band under Mr. Manns's directions. Madame Rudersdorff sang Mozart's "Non temer" in her most forcible style, and also gave Randegger's new song, "The Fairy Queen," as well as Arditi's "Il Bacio," receiving a well merited encore in the latter, when she sang a Spanish song, "La Calesara," by Yardier, with great spirit, accompanying herself on the pianoforte. M. Lotto created a *furor* in both his performances, Vieuxtemps' *Morceau de Salon*, and a composition of his own, in which he received an unanimous encore, and gave the "Carnival de Venise," which created a still greater effect. Signor Montelli sang "Largo al factotum," and a French song, "L'Ange Dechu," by Vogel, with no great success. The concert terminated with the overture to *Oberon*.

WINDSOR ROYAL GLEE AND MADRIGAL SOCIETY.—The first subscription concert by the members of this society took place on Tuesday evening. The hall was crowded. Dr. Elvey was conductor. The first part consisted of Locke's *Macbeth* music, the second of madrigals, and the third of songs, duets, glees, &c. The solos were sung by Madlle. Louisa Van Noorden, Messrs. Tolley and David Lambert, whose performances were excellent. The choruses were given admirably. In the second part the gems were "In the merry spring time" (Ravenscroft 1614); "Die not fond man" (J. Ward 1608); "What saith my dainty darling" (Morley 1595); and Pearsall's song of "The frank companions" The third part commenced with the *rondo finale* of the "Bohemian Girl," charmingly sung by Mlle. Van Noorden, followed by the beautiful glee, "O thou whose beams," by Mr. Goss, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral. Mr. Marriott then sang one of his own ballads, "Dream on, young hearts," which obtained a hearty *encore*. Next followed the duet, "Parigi, O cara," sung by Madlle. Van Noorden and Mr. Tolley and encored. Mr. David Lambert, of whose voice and singing we have frequently had occasion to speak, went through the part assigned to him *con amore*, and in Hatton's new song, "The gallant knight," received an enthusiastic *encore*. Madlle. Van Noorden then gave "The Swiss parting" in such a manner as to receive a flattering *encore*. This was followed by the chorus of soldiers from Gounod's *Faust*. The concert concluded with "God save the Queen."

HACKNEY.—A most successful concert was given at the Manor Rooms, on Wednesday evening (18th), by the members of the ENGLISH GLEE AND OPERA UNION (though it lacked the interest of former "operatic entertainments," to those who had heard this little company in the music from *Il Trovatore*, &c.) The programme contained several of Bishop's best glees, and a quartett by C. Masters, "Sweet dreams attend thy sleeping." Madame Bennett Gilbert was encored in "Will you come to my mountain home," and in Barnett's "Singing Lesson" with Mr. Abraham Thomas; the like compliment being awarded to Miss Alice Golding in Turner's ballad, "My faithful one, my own," and Gabriel's "The Skipper and his boy," for which last she substituted "Alice Adair" (B. Gilbert), which was warmly received. Mr. Abraham Thomas sang "I'm a Roamer" (Mendelssohn), and "Rage thou angry Storm" (Benedict). Mr. Stanley Mayo was encored in "Home of my heart" (Wallace), and "The weeping dew" (B. Gilbert). The duets and trios were well sung, if we except "The Sailor sighs" (Balfe). The concert concluded with "Vadasi via di qua" (Martini), which was given with such gusto as to elicit an encore. A pianoforte solo, entitled *Barcarolle*, was executed with refined taste by the composer and director, Dr. Bennett Gilbert.

SINGING COMPETITION.—The vacancy in the choir of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and Eton College, caused by Mr. Lambert leaving for Durham Cathedral, was competed for on Friday, Nov. 20th, by Mr. Penna, of London; Mr. Grice, of York Cathedral; Mr. Drayton, of Wells Cathedral; Mr. Bishop, of Chichester Cathedral; Mr. Kenningham of Gloucester Cathedral; and Mr. Christian, of the choir of St. Andrews, Wells-street, London. The trial took place in St. George's Chapel. The vocal abilities of none of these gentlemen reached the required standard, consequently the Dean and Chapter decided to have a fresh set of candidates and another trial. When Mr. Lambert was appointed at Windsor, there were twenty competitors. —*Windsor Royal Standard.*

BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL.—The Earl of Lichfield has accepted the invitation of the committee to act as President of the Triennial Musical Festival to be held in the autumn of next year, in aid of the funds of the Birmingham General Hospital.

SIGNOR BONETTI (the Bonetti of Mr. Lumley in 185—), formerly *chef d'orchestre* of the Italian Opera in Paris, is engaged for the Italian theatre in Cadiz, where Madame Penco is about to give a short series of representations.

MANCHESTER.—Mr. Charles Hallé gave a performance of *Elijah*, at the Free Trade Hall, on Friday evening, the 20th instant, of which *The Examiner* and *Times* gives the following account:

"An extra concert was given by Mr. Hallé, for the purpose of introducing Madame Goldschmidt in the greatest of modern oratorios, *Elijah*—a work which seems to increase the admiration with each renewed occasion. Previous to the commencement of the performance, Mr. Hallé appealed to the audience on behalf of Madame Goldschmidt, who, to use her own expression, "felt that she could not sing as she ought, but she would do her best." The announcement was received in a gracious manner, and, we need scarcely add, *bespeaks criticism of the gentlest character*. Madame Goldschmidt took the soprano portion of the concerted music, and won for the charming trio—in which she was assisted by Miss Susanna Cole and Miss Palmer—the encore of the evening. Miss Cole obtained the privilege of singing the music allotted to the "Youth,' and gave it in a manner that could not fail to be favorably recognised by the musician, so charming was it in quality of voice and so perfect in intonation. She also took the soprano in "O come every one that thirsteth," with equal credit to her talent. Miss Palmer, as the contralto, received warm applause in the well-known air "O rest in the Lord." Mr. Wilbye Cooper and Mr. Lewis Thomas, as tenor and bass, met with a gracious reception. That part of the performance most worthy of approval was the band and chorus, which were ably conducted by Mr. Otto Goldschmidt. Some of the choruses were very finely delivered, we might especially notice, "For He, the Lord our God," "Hear, mighty God," as well as the whole of the music given to the "Priest of Baal," the great chorus which closes the first part, "Thanks be to God!"; and equally fine "Behold! God the Lord passed by."

LIVERPOOL.—The performance of Handel's cantata *L'Allegro e ild Pensieroso* in this town would at any time be an interesting musical event, and although we can scarcely commend the alterations in the plan of the work which have been made by Herr Goldschmidt preparatory to its revival, we feel that thanks are due to that gentleman for again bringing into notice a work of the highest order, by a composer whose greatness has never been equalled. To those familiar with the poems of Milton which bear the names given to Handel's *cantata*, we may as well point out that in setting the words to music the composer has thought fit not to write the piece in two portions—the first joyous and the last thoughtful. This would have been thought intolerable; the plan adopted is to bring the two extremes constantly into contrast; thus "Haste thee, nymph" is followed by "Come, pensive nun," which gives place in turn to "Mirth, admit me of thy crew." These and similar contrasts are wrought out in the music in such a manner as to place both conditions of the mind in the most favorable light. As, however, the work is brought to a conclusion by the noble chorus, "These pleasures, Melancholy, give, and we with thee will choose to live," it is fair to presume that the palm is given to "sweetest Melancholy," and thus Handel has shown his usual judgment in fulfilling the design of the poet. These latter remarks apply to the present arrangement, but in the edition edited by Mr. W. H. Monk the *cantata* is brought to a conclusion by a third part, *Il Moderato*. In this division there are two fine choruses, and a duet for soprano and tenor, which, as duets are rather scarce in Handel's works, would have been a welcome feature in the programme. Handel's music has been sacrificed probably to do justice to Milton, for the words of the *moderato* are not his but a spurious imitation by Dr. Jennings. The transpositions were numerous—indeed, the counter-tenor part was altogether made away with, nor was the fine song, "Some time let gorgeous tragedy," which was written for that voice, even taken as transposed by Handel himself, but was included with much other that was good among the many "cuts" made by the conductor. We much regret in common with many of the musical people who heard the performance, that while Herr Goldschmidt was about it he did not publish a revised edition of the work.

The concert commenced with Handel's concerto in B minor for stringed instruments, perhaps never before performed in Liverpool,—certainly not within the recollection of the writer. As might have been expected, the interest of the audience centred in the gifted lady, still by far the best exponent of serious music living. The air "Sweet bird" was loudly applauded; and, in "May at last my weary age," the effect on the audience was very great. Madame Sherrington did her work admirably, and the air, with chorus, "Or let the merry bells ring round," was excellently rendered. Mr. Montem Smith sang very well, and did not find his part too high for him. His best effort was in "These delights if thou canst give." Mr. Thomas in the little he had to do was all that could be wished. The band played the concerto almost to perfection.

The choruses were given with precision—though a little light and shade would have been desirable. Mr. Hurst, who had a prominent part on the organ, played with taste and judgment. Herr Goldschmidt conducted.

VIENNA.—Sig. Salvi has gone to Italy, for the purpose of engaging a contralto, and of concluding his negotiations with Sig. Graziani, the barytone. If he succeeds in his object, he will, on his return, publish the names of his company, and his programme for the season.—In consequence of the off-hand behaviour of Herren Beck, Schmidt, and Mad. Dustmann, who, on several occasions, have, by their whims and caprices, caused him serious embarrassment, Sig. Salvi, as we announced last week, has applied to the Intendant-in-Chief of the Imperial Theatres for assistance. According to report, Herr Laube thinks of pursuing the same course, as, among his company, also, there are a number of individuals who profit by every opportunity for intriguing against and thwarting him. "And yet," observes a German paper, "these are the persons who, with a self-sufficient tone, boundless arrogance, and a very moderate amount of artistic talent, have, on every occasion, the word 'artist' on their lips, while they behave like mere uneducated boors."—"At this moment, Vienna contains within its walls three brothers Strauss," says the *Neue Berliner Musik-Zeitung*. It then goes on in the following strain of banter: "Despite this fact, Vienna is tranquil; the funds are not affected, and, in a word, no one has a notion of the good fortune the city enjoys. The grand-master of the Strausses, Johann, the husband of the whilom fair singer, Mdlle. Treffy, will not bless the Viennese with his professional presence for four or five weeks, until the expiration of which period we shall vainly sigh for a glance of him in the orchestra. He will then, in return for long attendance in his ante-chamber, good payment, and fair words, condescend, during the Carnival, to conduct at some Committee balls, and compose a few of his immortal waltzes. Previously to this happy event, Johann Strauss, the walz-fiddler, may be seen every day driving along the Prater, like a '*grand seigneur*,' and Mad. Strauss like a '*grande princesse*.' People must do the aristocratic a little!—Josef Strauss, who is far more musical, more amiable, and more modest than Johann, conducts, all the year round, 'Strauss's Orchestra,' as it is called, though Johann looks upon himself as its lord and master. Johann, by the way, thinks of leaving Vienna altogether, and, after fulfilling his two year's engagement in St. Petersburgh, of fixing his residence in Paris. If Mexico becomes an empire, Josef will accompany thither the future Emperor Ferdinand Max, in the capacity of 'Hofconcertmeister.'—Edward, the youngest brother, is suffering from a chest complaint, of a pulmonary nature, from which there is but slight chance of his recovery. Thus, in a short time, Vienna may not possess a single Strauss, and yet it will be happy!"—The receipts at the Operahouse are considerably better this season than they were last. During this month alone about 20,000 florins were taken, exclusive of the large subscriptions. The performance for the Invalid-Fund produced something more than 1397 florins.—According to report, Herr Ernst Pauer, from London, will shortly give three Historical Concerts.—Herr von Flotow has been staying here for some time, during which he has completed his opera of *Naida*, intended for the Imperial Operahouse. The *libretto* is by St.-George and Léon Halévy, and is adapted for the German stage by Herr Dingelstedt. There are only three characters; a lyrical soprano, with a great deal of *bravura;* a high and vigorous tenor; and a comic bass. Herr von Flotow has another new opera: *Zilda, oder die Nacht der Betrogenen*, also intended for the Imperial Operahouse. The *libretto* is by MM. St.-George and Girot, and the principal female part is destined for Mdlle. Wildauer. This work is, at present, in rehearsal, moreover, at the Opéra-Comique, Paris, where it will be produced in the course of the season.

"STELLA"—*Valse Brillante*; "THE HUNT"—*Morceaux de Salon*; "THE VILLAGE FETE"—*Morceaux de Salon*. Composed by Mrs. JOSEPH ROBINSON. (Bussell, Dublin; and Chappell and Co., London.) In these days, when every opera air is made the theme of fantasias for the pianoforte, and teased and torn, or embellished in brocades of many colors, amidst various devices, to exhibit the manipulatory dexterity of young ladies in their teens, who are induced. with many entreaties, to take their place at the drawing-room pianoforte, and to fancy that they are treating the listeners to music when they are only producing a flashy succession of not disagreeable sounds, it is quite refreshing to alight on such music as that now before us. Mrs. Robinson has here given us three pieces in different styles, all constructed upon pleasing and original subjects, skilfully diversified, each being built upon an appropriate theme, elegantly carried out and treated in a most musician-like manner And while, though the music—meaning tunefulness of phrase well expressed and impressive—is the first thing apparently thought of by the fair composer, the idea of combining interest and beauty in pieces which are adapted to improve the student has not been lost sight of. "Stella" is a charmingly-written *valse*, sparkling and fanciful, giving good exercise to the fingers with pleasure to the ears. "The Village Fête" is a piece of a different character, in which a lovely theme is borne upon figures of accompaniment rich and varied; while the succession of shakes towards the close gives brightness and finish to the whole. "The Hunt" will recall the chase to every hearer—joyous and unflagging, suggesting hound and horn from the first bar to the last, and having the peculiar felicity of warming the pulse and raising the spirits as it bounds along in cheerful cadences of sunny glee. In closing, we can only say that three original pieces of more attractive interest we have seldom noticed, and they possess the additional attraction of not being difficult to perform, as, with a moderate amount of practice, most amateur pianoforte-players could accomplish them.—*Dublin Evening Mail.*

WARSAW.—We have already stated in the MUSICAL WORLD that Chopin's piano, in the possession of his sister, was destroyed at the burning of the Zamoysky Palace. The following additional particulars may not be uninteresting. In one of the apartments occupied by Mad. Barcinki (Chopin's sister's), stood a simple grand piano, which, despite its unpretending appearance, was an object of great interest to everyone who visited the place. Above it was hung a speaking likeness, by Ary Scheffer, of the deceased composer. This instrument, made in Warsaw before 1820, according to the then prevailing style, was that on which Chopin, when a boy, received his first pianoforte lessons, and, when a dreaming youth, played over his first inspirations, previously to committing them to paper. It became, therefore, a point of honour, so to speak, with all celebrated artists, especially pianists, who happened to pass through this city, to pay a visit to Mad. Barcinki, for the purpose of beholding the artistic relic. Alas! it exists no longer! It perished with the portrait. Rude arms tore it from where it stood, and threw it out of the window. All Mad. Bacinki's entreaties that this precious *souvenir* of her departed brother might be spared were in vain; even the portrait which she held in her hands was wrenched from her grasp, and flung after the piano into the street.

DARMSTADT.—Sig. Carrion has been starring it in *Il Barbiere*. He was applauded, but the opera failed to produce its usual effect. In fact, it hardly could have done so, considering the jumble of languages which characterised the performance. The audience very good naturedly made no objection to the star's singing in a foreign idiom, for stars are allowed a great many privileges; but why on earth the Rosina and the Figaro should sing at one time in Italian and at another in German, was more than any one could comprehend. It is high time such monstrous and meaningless absurdities were put down by the public with a strong hand.

LEIPSIC.—Herr Hans von Bülow has commenced a series of concerts for Ancient and Modern Pianoforte Music, in the Gewandhaus. The first programme included Prelude and Fugue for the organ in B flat minor, by J. S. Bach (Liszt's arrangement); Prelude and Fugue (E minor) Op. 53, No. 1, by Mendelssohn; Prelude and Fugue (E major), Op. 53, No. 3, Anton Rubinstein; "Sonate Mélancolique," Op. 49, Moscheles; Variations and Fugue, Op. 17, Kiel; Ricordanza" (Concert Etude), and Polonaise, in E major, Liszt; Fantaisie, Op. 18, Hummel; and "Robert-Fantaisie," Liszt.

HOMBURG.—The new Theatre, in connection with the Casino, was to be opened on the 4th inst. It is very splendid, containing three tiers of boxes, besides a separate royal box. It is decorated with velvet and gold, and will easily contain twelve hundred persons. During the winter, a French dramatic company will play in it; during the summer, there will be a grand operatic company.

GRAND PROVINCIAL TOUR.

MADAME WEISS (Soprano), MADAME MEREST (Contralto), MR. CARTER (Tenor), and MR. HENRY PHILLIPS (Bass). Harp, MR. FREDERICK CHATTERTON. Solo Pianist and Accompanist, MR. HENRY BAUMER. This party will start on a tour of professional engagements, for Oratorios and Miscellaneous Concerts, on the 28th December, and can accept engagements during January 1864. All applications to be made to Madame Weiss, St. George's Villas, 45 Gloucester Road, N.W.; Madame Merest, 7 Adelphi Terrace, Strand; Mr. Henry Baumer, 22 King Henry's Road, St. John's Wood Park, London, N.W; and Mr. Frederick Chatterton, 53 Acacia Road, N.W.

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